United Nations A/59/PV.24

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-ninth session

24th plenary meeting
Monday, 11 October 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/59/421)

The President (*spoke in French*): If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I would like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 59/1).

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 113.

Agenda item 7

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/59/335)

The President (*spoke in French*): As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations,

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and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

In that connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/59/335. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 11 and 53

Report of the Security Council (A/59/2)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Sir Emyr Jones Parry, President of the Security Council, to introduce the Council's report.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: On behalf of all members of the Security Council, I would like to offer my congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. It is my sincere hope that during your tenure, relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly will continue to develop and strengthen as both bodies move forward to meet the many challenges facing the international community in the twenty-first century.

I have the honour today, as President of the Security Council for October 2004, to introduce the annual report of the Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly. The report I am presenting today covers the period from 1 August 2003 until 31 July 2004. The introduction to the annual report, prepared by Romania in its capacity as President of the Security Council in July, sets out in detail the Council's activities for the period under review.

As members will see from the annual report, the Security Council has addressed a wide range of conflicts, threats to peace and security and the United Nations peacekeeping operations established to restore stability in those situations. The report gives a comprehensive description of these activities, and I would like to highlight here today some of the key issues on which the Council has focused.

West Africa saw progress in peace-building efforts, but also outbreaks of violence and political crises. The Security Council has worked hard to develop strategies to deal with those complex situations by encouraging all parties to engage in political negotiations and to avoid resorting to armed violence, particularly against unarmed civilians and children. Council members underlined that message during their mission to West Africa in June. They welcomed the continued improvement in the consolidation of security in Sierra Leone, with the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, followed by the start of trials at the Special Court. Improvements in the overall security situation in Liberia, as the United Nations Mission in Liberia deployed throughout the country, permitted the process of disarmament and demobilization to start re-integrating ex- combatants back into society.

As the report to the General Assembly makes clear, achieving sustainable peace and development in post-conflict situations like those in West Africa requires a collective approach. It is vital that the various parts of the United Nations family coordinate their efforts — including with other stakeholders outside the United Nations — to pursue common goals and a comprehensive, integrated strategy. That strategy must encompass the transition from peacekeeping to peace-building, rule of law and development, if we are to create the conditions for lasting stability.

Despite those positive indicators, much still needs to be done to bring tranquility to the African continent – too many conflicts rage with innocent civilians and children caught in the middle. The transition process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains intact, but has faced a series of destabilizing incidents and challenges. On 22 June 2004, the Security Council invited the Secretary-General to consider enhancing the rapid reaction capacity of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Consideration of MONUC's capacity and future mandate continued throughout August. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Security Council strongly condemned violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and requested the Secretary-General to establish an international commission of inquiry to investigate all human rights violations.

Council members became increasingly concerned by reports of large-scale violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Darfur, the Sudan, and about the potential that had to derail the north-south peace process in that country. In response to those reports, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement on 25 May (S/PRST/2004/18), and resolution 1556 (2004) on 30 July 2004. The resolution called upon the Government of the Sudan to fulfil all the commitments made in the joint communiqué of 3 July 2004 and for the rebels, without preconditions, to negotiate a political settlement. The Secretary-General will continue to report to the Security Council on compliance with resolution 1556 (2004), as well as on the situation in the Darfur region. The Council also adopted resolution 1547 (2004) on 11 June, authorizing the Secretary-General to establish a special political mission in the Sudan to prepare for a peace support operation following the signature of a comprehensive peace agreement.

The Security Council considered a number of issues relating to civilians affected by armed conflict, including the protection of civilians in armed conflict, HIV and AIDS, mine action, children affected by armed conflict and women, peace and security. The output of that work included two resolutions. In August 2003, following the bombing of United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, the Council agreed on an unprecedented resolution on the protection of humanitarian personnel in armed conflict. In April 2004, the Council agreed on a further resolution on children affected by armed conflict, calling for concrete steps to be taken in situations on the Council's agenda where there are egregious violations of children's rights.

In addition, the Security Council debated other issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security, including justice and the rule of law; post-conflict national reconciliation; the role of business in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building; United Nations peacekeeping; complex crises and the United Nations response; the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building; cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes; and civilian aspects of conflict management and peace-building. One recurring theme of those debates was the need for greater interaction between the Security Council and the other bodies of the United Nations, as well as with other regional and international organizations, to ensure a coherent, collaborative approach to establishing and maintaining peace and security.

The coordination of international efforts for the design of long-term development strategies to achieve and sustain stability has also been the approach adopted with regard to Haiti. By its resolution 1542 (2004), besides addressing security and political aspects and the human rights situation, the Council emphasized the need for the international community to contribute to the promotion of social and economic development in that Caribbean country.

On 7 April 2004, on the occasion of the commemoration of the Rwanda genocide, the President of the Security Council addressed the General Assembly on behalf of the Council (see A/58/PV.82). In that statement, the Council, inter alia, expressed its support for the nomination of a special adviser to the Secretary-General on the prevention of genocide.

Iraq's political transition featured prominently in the Security Council. On 8 June, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1546 (2004), endorsing the formation of a sovereign interim Government, defining the United Nations role and setting a clear path for the future political process. That path included the formation of a sovereign interim Government of Iraq by 30 June 2004; the convening of a national conference to select a consultative council; the holding of direct democratic elections no later than 31 January 2005 and the drafting of a permanent constitution leading to a constitutionally elected Government by 31 December 2005.

The Council also decided in resolution 1546 (2004) that, as circumstances permitted and as requested by the Iraqi Government, the United Nations would play a leading role: assisting in the convening of the national conference; advising and supporting the process of holding elections; and promoting national dialogue and consensus-building on the drafting of a national constitution.

On 28 June 2004, the Security Council welcomed the handover of full responsibility and authority for governing Iraq to the fully sovereign and independent Interim Government of Iraq.

On Afghanistan, the Security Council received regular briefings and reports from the Secretary-General and the Department of Peacekeeping

Operations. Throughout those discussions, the Council continued to stress the importance of a secure environment for free, fair and credible democratic elections, scheduled for 9 October 2004. Linked to that was the Council's continued focus on the need to accelerate progress on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants in Afghanistan. On 13 October 2003, through resolution 1510 (2003), the Security Council authorized the expansion of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force to allow it, as resources permitted, to support the Afghan Transitional Authority and its successors in the maintenance of security in areas outside Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. On 26 March 2004, the Council also extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for an additional 12 months.

The Security Council continued to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on a regular basis, in particular with monthly briefings by the Secretary-General or his representatives. In November 2003, the Council adopted resolution 1515 (2003), endorsing the Quartet's performance-based road map towards a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Council also continued to follow the aspects of the conflict in the Middle East between Israel and Syria and between Israel and Lebanon.

The threat to international peace and security by acts of terrorism throughout the world remained a high priority for the Security Council. The Counter-Terrorism Committee continued to work intensively, and has now evolved to assume a more proactive role in its dialogue with Member States in order to evaluate the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). The revitalization of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in February 2004 will enable the Committee to take on a more operational and visible approach in order to strengthen the global international consensus in the fight against terrorism.

Related to that, the Security Council tackled a threat that had not been tackled before. Resolution 1540 (2004), adopted on 28 April 2004, fills a gap in the international community's defences relating to the risk that weapons of mass destruction might fall into the hands of non-State actors. The Council attaches importance to the fact that the adoption of the resolution was preceded by a series of intensive consultations and discussions with Council and non-Council members. That was a concrete demonstration of the importance the Council attaches to the views of the wider United Nations membership.

The Security Council remains focused on the need to build upon past years' levels of transparency. When possible, public sessions of the Council were held, wrap-up meetings hosted and thematic debates in the Council used to enhance our collective understanding of the key issues affecting the international community at large. That emphasis on transparency is invaluable to the Security Council in order to enable the wider United Nations membership to interact more fully with the Security Council.

To make it more readable, the report before the Assembly is shorter than in the past. I also recognize that the demand from non-Council members for more information on the Council's activities will increase. The Security Council will be attentive to the comments of Members on the report before the Assembly today in the debate that will now follow.

In concluding, on behalf of all Security Council members, I would like to thank members of the Assembly for this opportunity to introduce the Council's report. I would also like to express the appreciation of all Security Council members for the work of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat at large. Their tireless professionalism, often in dangerous locations throughout the world, assists the Council to fulfil its role as set out in the United Nations Charter.

If I may, I shall now say something in my national capacity. I would like to make a short statement on the other agenda item being jointly debated, namely, the question of equitable representation on the Security Council and related matters.

One clear message that can be drawn from the overview that I have just given is that the Security Council's primary role in maintaining international peace and security is as important as it has ever been. The Council is active across the broad range of threats to international peace and security, both in managing individual crises around the world and in addressing the generic problems that face societies in conflict. The United Nations membership as a whole has a shared interest in a Council that is credible, effective and decisive.

The United Kingdom believes that the Security Council would be strengthened by an increase in its membership to ensure that it better represents the modern world. As the British Foreign Secretary reminded us in his speech to the General Assembly at its 8th meeting, on 23 September, the United Kingdom has long supported the case for expanding the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. We support including Germany, Japan, India and Brazil among the permanent membership. We also want to see a permanent member from Africa on the Council. An increase in the non-permanent membership also offers the chance to further enhance the voice of the developing world in the Council's discussions. This is a reform that we have been discussing for many years, and one that the United Kingdom believes is now long overdue. We would encourage all Member States to engage constructively in the debate in order to find a solution on which all can agree.

As well as reform to the Council's membership, the United Kingdom has continued to work for increased transparency, accessibility and accountability in the Council's work. Our debate today is part of the developing relationship that exists between the Council and the General Assembly, as well as other parts of the United Nations system, such as the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat. Many of the subjects on which the Council is engaged, such as the establishment of justice and the rule of law, may equally engage the responsibilities of the principal bodies of the United Nations.

The United Kingdom looks forward to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. It is vital that the United Nations evolve to respond to the range of changing threats and opportunities that face the whole membership — from, for example, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation to terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. A responsive and effective Security Council is a vital part of that picture. We would encourage the Panel to ensure that its proposals reinforce the Council's ability to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter.

Mr. McIvor (New Zealand): I have the pleasure of making this statement on behalf of Australia, Canada and my own country, New Zealand.

This is the first time that our group of countries has made a joint statement in plenary meeting on the two items under discussion. It reflects our commitment to efforts over the next 12 months towards reaching agreement on Security Council reform, and our shared positions on a range of issues about the working methods and transparency of the Council.

We would first like to thank the Security Council and the Secretariat for the work that has gone into the preparation of this year's report. It seems that the workload of the Security Council is increasing in both intensity and volume each year, which has implications for us all. Australia, Canada and New Zealand have the following comments on the Council's report, with some suggestions on future action.

First, on the transparency of the Security Council's work, we welcome the number of open meetings over the last year and ask that a greater proportion of such meetings be held in the future. Open meetings and briefings are crucial to allowing information to flow between the Security Council and the wider United Nations community. We think they improve both the quality of the Council's decision making and the membership's understanding of the Council's work. Early distribution of the monthly programme of work, even in draft form, is important in that regard, particularly for small missions with limited resources.

Secondly, although there have been some steps in the right direction, there is still a long way to go in improving Security Council consultation with the wider membership. While we fully recognize the need for timely decision-making, the Council must seek the views of Member States before taking decisions on issues that affect them, particularly decisions that impose obligations on Member States to act. That is particularly the case with respect to countries contributing troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The onus is on the Security Council to initiate that dialogue at an early stage and to avoid presenting the membership with a fait accompli. Discussions need to be meaningful, not lip service.

The reform of the Security Council remains a key issue. There is widespread support for expansion of the membership of the Council, but no consensus on the issue of new permanent membership. The President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session worked hard to advance the discussion, but the Open-ended

Working Group effectively remains deadlocked. There is no realistic prospect that the Working Group on its own can achieve agreement. We will not rehearse here the arguments in favour of a larger, and therefore more legitimate, Council. Our countries have individually set out our national positions on Security Council reform on a number of occasions, most recently in statements during the general debate.

Australia, Canada and New Zealand hope that a proposal of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will provide a basis for a successful negotiation on a more representative Council. The Panel has been asked by the Secretary-General to provide independent recommendations on that and other key issues facing the United Nations. We urge Member States not to seek to pre-empt the Panel's report, but rather to respect the Panel's independence and keep an open mind on possible ways forward.

Australia, Canada and New Zealand are prepared to be flexible. We agree that reform must involve an increase in non-permanent membership and that there can be no extension of the veto. We look to enhanced opportunities for Security Council membership for all Member States, not just a privileged few.

We recognize how important Council reform is to Member States. We also share concerns that deep-seated differences on that matter not hold up a package of reforms aimed at strengthening the United Nations and enhancing its ability effectively to meet current and future challenges. But that does not mean that we think this issue should be considered separately. First, including Security Council reform within a broader package may increase rather than decrease the prospects of achieving consensus on it. Secondly, the Security Council is at the core of the United Nations response to threats to international security. At the same time, the Council has expanded the range of issues that it determines constitute threats. Accordingly, proposals for enhancing collective action in dealing with a broad spectrum of threats cannot sensibly be separated from the issue of the representativeness of the Council. What the Council does, and who is on it, are inextricably linked.

As important as the structure of the Council may be, what is no less critical is the manner in which it represents the interests of the global community in whose name it speaks and acts. It is a community comprising individual human beings as well as States. Accordingly the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security must, as the Council has recognized incrementally, include the security of individual human beings as well as nations. In that context, we welcome references, such as that in resolution 1564 (2004), underlining that a Government bears the primary responsibility to protect its population within its territory. We would add, however, that the Council cannot ignore its obligations if the actions of a State violate that responsibility. What we seek is the evolution of international law and practice so that multilateral action may be taken in situations of extreme humanitarian emergency.

It is worth remembering that membership in the Security Council is not the only way to influence, and broaden the basis of, Council decisions. We should consider further changes in the operation and practices of the Council to allow non-members to make greater input to Council deliberations. There has been some progress with respect to peacekeeping issues in that regard. Consultation, however, must be meaningful. We should also look more closely at the relationship between the Council and other bodies of the United Nations.

This leads us to a final point. We have noted that the Council's agenda is busier than ever. The Council focuses on acute threats to international peace and security. But there is a need for better arrangements to provide more effective and coordinated United Nations oversight of international peace-building efforts in post-conflict situations over the longer term. That oversight would need to involve a wide range of players. We look forward to future discussion on that and related issues once the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change has reported at the end of this year.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council today is undoubtedly the United Nations body that has most increased its power. It now has 17 peacekeeping operations under way, of which 11 were established since 1991. Those peacekeeping operations currently have a dominant impact on the Organization's budget. The number of Security Council resolutions has risen from 646, during its first 44 years of existence, to over 1,000 today. Similarly, the Council's area of competence includes not only international conflicts but also civil disputes, nation-building, terrorism, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other topics such as women and

children in conflict situations, the protection of civilians in armed conflict and small arms and light weapons. Given the current importance of the Council, in my statement I will first take up the character of Security Council reports to the General Assembly before turning to the Council's working methods and, lastly, the issue of equitable representation.

With regard to the Security Council's reports to the General Assembly, Peru appreciates the efforts made to improve the character of the introductions of those documents. Nevertheless, the report of the Security Council continues to be descriptive in nature and contains only a chronological account of the measures taken by the Council. It does not assess difficulties, progress, setbacks or current trends in resolving the conflicts posing a threat to international peace and security. If the report of the Security Council is not analytical in nature, as that of the Secretary-General is, no one can know whether or not the security conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have changed since the adoption of resolution 1565 (2004). Nor can we know, for example, the impact of the enormous quantity of drugs produced in Afghanistan on the national reconstruction process in that country. Likewise, it is impossible to know whether or not the current insecurity in Iraq has an effect on the possibility of providing United Nations electoral assistance in accordance with resolution 1546 (2004). We know even less about whether or not the trials in the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia have contributed to reducing impunity in the world.

If the report of the Security Council were read today by journalists, students of international relations or the public at large, none of them would get an assessment of the progress, setbacks or trends in the conflicts threatening peace and security in the world. It is therefore necessary to produce a Security Council report that has the virtue of being understood by international public opinion in order that it may be disseminated by the press and discussed in international academic circles, as are the analytical reports on human development, the World Bank's reports on development and the report of the Secretary-General, all of which are known throughout the world. But, today, it is no exaggeration to say that no one but us is aware of the report of the Security Council.

We therefore need a report that connects the Security Council not just to the General Assembly but also to all of humankind. That would make it possible for the Security Council's peace efforts, and their limits, to be known. All of that would provide a sense of reality and help to dispel the bad impressions that arise with regard to the work of the United Nations in instances when the Council does not quickly resolve a conflict threatening international peace and security.

I should now like to turn to the second subject of my statement, namely, the working methods of the Council. We should today recognize that the Council has been reacting better to new and complex crises, making it possible for States that are not members of the Council and members of international civil society to participate. Among the Council's most valuable methods of work today is the practice of carrying out visits to the field, above all in order to obtain a real understanding of civil conflicts. Those visits should be improved by enabling the Council to establish good connections with civil society, as well as with local, political and religious groups in countries in conflict. The Council should also seek to connect with officials of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and regional organizations familiar with the socio-political situation in the country in conflict being visited. Those visits should also be proactive in nature. They should not only be held once a conflict has broken out, but also when there is information indicating that there is a threat of civil war or of massive violations of human rights.

The Council must not continue to react simply to specific events in civil conflicts. It must instead carry out an in-depth analysis of the structural causes of those conflicts. Today, for example, all recent strategic analyses agree that social exclusion is the main factor that turns political, ethnic and religious rivalries into intense civil conflicts, which, in turn lead to real wars of national depredation, in which the most heinous crimes against humanity are committed. For that reason, the Council's field visits should be properly prepared, above all to gather information about the degree of social exclusion in the country visited. If account is not taken of social exclusion in order to resolve and prevent conflicts, we would be ignoring the most important structural component of international violence.

We believe that multilateralism cannot be divorced from reality. It is in that context that I would like to conclude by addressing the issue of equitable representation in the Security Council. For 10 years

now, all countries concerned have been putting forth their positions with regard to expanding the membership of the Security Council, but with no results. The most recent report of the Open-ended Working Group on the subject illustrates the fact that there are as many positions as there are countries. It is clear that there is no consensus; and without consensus there can be no reform. It is as simple as that. We must be realistic, given the situation. The lesson of 10 years of Council reform is that the more we debate reform, the more points of disagreement we express.

For example, at the moment there is not even consensus on the definition of what constitutes a regional group. Nor is there consensus about the criteria for membership of the Security Council. The path that reform is taking is a sterile one that satisfies no one. In terms of realpolitik, the only thing clear in the entire 10-year exercise is that no reform process can be carried out without a minimum level of commitment among the five permanent members of the Security Council. That means that, for the reform exercise to cease being sterile, the permanent members of the Security Council need to make a joint effort to arrive at a basic level of agreement as to what they consider to be viable Council reform. We must start with at least a minimally acceptable formula that is veto-proof. If such a compromise is not possible, then, in the final analysis, we will have to be realistic and abandon the reform. What we cannot do is to continue as we have been with a sterile exercise that goes on for years, because that can bring discredit to the United Nations.

All of the thoughts I have shared in order to improve the report, working methods and reform process of the Security Council are a reflection of Peru's commitment to the effectiveness of the Security Council — and hence our desire to be elected by the General Assembly next year as a non-permanent member of the Council, so that we may continue to make suggestions and contributions to improve the functioning of the Council.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would like very sincerely to thank Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry for his excellent presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/59/2). We have always believed that the Assembly's consideration of the Security Council's report should not be a mere formality and that it should provide the General Assembly with a valuable opportunity for an in-depth analysis of the Council's activities, as well as to identify the measures that should be taken to make the necessary improvements in the working methods of that important body. That interaction is also in the very interests of the Security Council, which should benefit from it by considering and using the ideas and constructive and innovative proposals that I am convinced will emerge from this debate. As is its prerogative, the Assembly could even take any action it considers appropriate at the end of this debate.

With regard to format, I am pleased that the report now contains an analytical section on the work of the Council in order to respond extensively to the comments and criticisms made in that regard by Member States throughout the years in this forum. The document before us indeed contains elements that are of interest to all Members of the United Nations.

In preparing the annual report this year, we the members of the Security Council set ourselves the goal of ensuring the best possible understanding of the issues before the Council. However, we are aware of the fact that the report is still far from being the substantive document that members of the United Nations need to assess the work of the Council. Algeria will continue to work with other members of the Council to see to it that, in the future, the analytical part of the report provides indicators of the results of the Council's work, as well as a section devoted to proposals aimed at improving its work. Since Algeria joined the Security Council we have worked actively to bring about both greater transparency in the Council's working methods and further democratization in its decision-making process.

With regard to the functioning of the Council, it should be said that a significant number of Council members made efforts during the period under consideration to improve both exchanges with all members of the United Nations and the transparency of that body's working methods. In order to limit the secrecy in the Council's work, a concerted effort was made to improve the dissemination of information about the activities of the Council and to hold more open briefings in order that non-members of the Council can benefit from the information provided by the Secretariat on various situations and conflicts and express their opinions on the decisions taken.

However, Algeria continues to believe that it would be wise, on a case-by-case basis, for the

consultations preceding those meetings to be open to parties interested or involved in the question under consideration in order to obtain their views. That would allow the Security Council to have a better understanding of the subjects under consideration and to take its decisions with better background information at hand. It is also important to relaunch the holding of wrap-up meetings open to non-members of the Council, even if only on a quarterly basis. We believe those meetings provide an opportunity to express views on issues of interest in an analytical, systematic, open and frank way.

During the negotiation of important resolutions — such as resolution 1540 (2004), on non-proliferation — Algeria had an opportunity to express strong reservations about the trend of the Council to become an international legislator and to replace the intergovernmental negotiating process. The Council should only adopt temporary rules to be imposed on all States in exceptional circumstances, such as to respond to situations that dangerously imperil international peace and security or in the absence of legal standards. Along with other members of the Council, my country has also expressed concern about the ease with which the Security Council now resorts to Chapter VII of the Charter, including in situations where it is not appropriate to do so.

With regard to substance, the report illustrates that, in the period under consideration, the Council has not only reacted to threats to international and regional peace and security, but has sometimes also taken direct action to address the large number of problems affecting the world. It has demonstrated determination and follow-up in dealing with certain issues. We believe that Security Council missions to areas in conflict or emerging from it, such as last June's mission to West Africa, have been extremely useful, because they have tackled the heart of the problems and enjoyed the support and cooperation of the parties concerned. Those missions have had a positive impact on local actors. Given such successful experiences, we encourage this type of initiative and action and call for them to be formalized and expanded to other conflict areas.

However, we would like to point out that in situations that were not a threat to international peace and security, the Security Council went beyond its mandate and acted inappropriately, as it did on 2 September 2004 when it adopted resolution 1559 (2004) on the situation in Lebanon. At the same time, we noted with regret that, although action needed to be taken to stop a bloodbath in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Security Council was, to say the least, hesitant, and did not display the necessary firmness and determination. More serious yet, we saw an implicit endorsement by some Member States of non-respect for resolutions. That certainly compromised the Council's authority. In that regard, we regret the fact that certain important Security Council resolutions have remained dead letters and have not been followed by action. That state of affairs often encouraged the recalcitrant party vis-à-vis the settlement of a conflict in a given situation to continue to defy the Council's will and to attack its credibility.

With regard to the Middle East, where the Council has a great responsibility, despite the adoption of many resolutions and a monthly meeting devoted to the subject, the Council was not able to make any notable progress to encourage or facilitate the peace process, or even to ensure the protection of the Palestinian population of the occupied territories. The case of the non-adoption of the recent draft resolution on Israel's deadly operation against the Palestinian population in Gaza, which I put forward a few days ago, was the twenty-ninth instance of the Council being paralysed by a veto and illustrates the powerlessness of the Security Council in discharging its responsibilities. We are convinced that, had the Council shown the necessary firmness with regard to Israel, the violence could have been largely avoided and the situation today would undoubtedly have been more conducive to a negotiated settlement.

It is therefore the very credibility of the Security Council that is in question today. That credibility will only be eroded further if the Council does not succeed in reversing that trend and demonstrating to the entire world its capacity to shoulder its responsibilities in the management and settlement of some of the disputes that have been on its agenda for quite some time. In that regard, the Council should have a comprehensive policy based on equity and justice. It should adopt a clear and coherent approach vis-à-vis the issues conferred upon it by the Charter, and in particular with regard to those that pertain to international peace and security.

I must point out that, in the course of its work during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the Open-ended Working Group on the

Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council employed a new methodology to consider the issues entrusted to it by its mandate. The members of the Group gave themselves the authority to hold substantive debates, even during consultations. That is contrary to the usual working method, which entailed assigning questions to two separate groups, one which dealt with issues pertaining to Council expansion and related issues, and the other which took up matters having to do with working methods and transparency.

Thanks to the leadership of Mr. Julian Hunte, the Working Group has been innovative in identifying certain important questions, including those having to do with regional representation, the conditions to be met for membership in the Security Council, the responsibility of the Council and the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, including improving the quality of the annual report now before us as well as the Council's special reports to the Assembly. That change in methodology has undoubtedly reanimated somewhat the discussions in the Working Group. But the overall prospects remain uncertain because of the ongoing impasse on substantive questions relating to Security Council reform.

The general debate during the current session has once again revealed that many delegations have reaffirmed their commitment to Council reform as a vital element in the overall reform of the United Nations. They have called for the expansion of the Council in order to enhance its representative character, thereby strengthening its legitimacy and authority. The debate has also highlighted the call of some delegations for a permanent seat in an enlarged Security Council. That rise in interest in the reform of the Council and the activism of some in that respect can be explained in part by the fact that the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change is to submit its report to the Secretary-General at the beginning of December and the fact that the Secretary-General's recommendations in that regard could include references to the reform of the Security Council.

Some believe that the issue of United Nations reform in general, and of the Security Council in particular, will evolve positively in the wake of the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. That is the hope of us all. We would also hope that such a development will remedy the current injustice by taking into account the interests of developing countries, especially those in Africa. My delegation is prepared to consider any proposal that will contribute to progress in our deliberations, so long as those proposals promote, through rotation, the broadest possible participation in the work of the Security Council. Nevertheless, we consider it essential that any plan to reform the Council not be divisive. On the contrary, such a programme should rally the broadest possible support from the General Assembly and should be part of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations, whose main bodies — and the relations between them — must be transformed in significant ways.

Lastly, regions must be permitted to decide how they wish to be represented in the Security Council. In that context, we would like to reaffirm our commitment to the concrete proposals regarding substantive issues made by members of the Non-Aligned Movement, in particular those pertaining to the expansion in the membership of the Council. All those proposals reflect a desire to strengthen the representative character and effectiveness of that important body. I also want to emphasize that any expansion in the composition of the Security Council must take into account Africa's claims — as set out at the Organization of African Unity summit held in Harare in 1997 and often expressed by my own and many other African delegations — to allocate to Africa at least two permanent, rotating seats and two additional non-permanent seats.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus takes note of the increased activities of the Security Council during the past year in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. We favour maintaining the momentum in improving the working methods of the Security Council. We also favour more openness in the Council's work and more intensive interaction between it and the General Assembly.

Belarus deems it necessary to continue the practice of holding open meetings of the Council at the ministerial level on the more serious problems facing the international community. In so doing, it is important that the Security Council act strictly within its area of competence and without impinging on the areas of responsibility of other principal bodies of the United Nations.

There has been a significant increase in the activities of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. We believe that Committee should become an effective tool in combating international terrorism, strengthening the counter-terrorist coalition under the auspices of the United Nations and monitoring compliance with the requirements of resolution 1373 (2001). Direct interaction between the Committee and regional organizations could certainly help carry out those tasks.

We are convinced of the need to strengthen the key role of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. Actions that circumvent the authority of the Council jeopardize the very foundation of international law and order. The role of the Council determines the importance of the activities of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Belarus supports the continued active use by the President of the current session of the General Assembly of the practice of consulting with regional groups of States to reform the membership and activities of the Security Council. Belarus shares the view that the reform of the Security Council cannot be reduced solely to changing the membership of the Council. We need to review the overall approach to assessing threats, as well as the way by which decisions are taken on effective ways to respond to them.

Belarus looks forward to the important contribution to be made by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in drafting recommendations on this matter. We would also like to draw the Assembly's attention to the primary individual responsibility of all Member States to choose the best option for reforming the membership and the work of the Security Council. We also wish to stress the special role played in that process by the General Assembly.

A generally acceptable formula for the expansion of the Security Council should be based on the elimination of the imbalance between the membership of the Council and that of the Organization, the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the allocation of seats and the prevention of new divisions on this issue among Member States.

We agree with the view of the Non-Aligned Movement that the membership of the Council should be expanded by 11 seats on a consensus basis. Increasing the number of non-permanent members should take into account the interests of all regional groups. We think it just and necessary that an additional seat be allocated to the Group of the Eastern European States.

With regard to the category of permanent members, additional seats should be allocated to the countries of the three developing regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as to two developed States, from Europe and from Asia, that have made the most tangible contribution to the maintenance of international security.

Successful reform of the Council will give great impetus to the work of the Organization and enhance its international authority. Failure to reform the Security Council would engender doubt as to the Organization's ability to transform itself in face of contemporary challenges. We must not allow that to happen. Belarus believes that only constructive interaction — taking into account the views of countries large and small, rich and poor — will make it possible to create a more authoritative, representative and effective Security Council. Our delegation is prepared to engage in that kind of cooperation.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): My delegation appreciates the fact that we are jointly debating two important reports, namely, the report of the Security Council on its work over the past year (A/59/2) and the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (A/58/47).

Also, this debate comes at a time when the threats associated with the current international security environment have exacerbated the difficulties confronting the Security Council. Those threats include international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, the consequences of the war in Iraq and crises such as those in the Middle East and Darfur. The debate also comes at a time when there is an increased sense of urgency about the need to reform and expand the Security Council to reflect the new international environment, so as to allow it to better deal with those threats.

There is no doubt that the Security Council has become the most active organ of the United Nations. The weakening of both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly has placed special emphasis on the work of the Security Council. Quite often, people outside these walls have mistaken the Security Council for the sum total of the United Nations. That is unfortunate and must be corrected for the sake of the entire United Nations.

In the past year we have also noticed that the Security Council has adopted some measures aimed at improving its working methods. Those improvements would be significant if they were permanent. But as long as the rules of procedure of the Council remain provisional, changes in the working methods of the Council, no matter how positive, will always seem inadequate.

Nonetheless, we are pleased that, over the past year, the Council has demonstrated an increased willingness to cooperate with other organs of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council. The closer cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council in assisting African countries that have emerged from conflict is much welcomed. Specifically, we wish to highlight the cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi as a good example of that closer working relationship between principal organs. In that context, we wish to pay tribute to Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, who made possible a joint visit to Guinea-Bissau earlier this year. The impact of having representatives both of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council reporting jointly on a country in dire need cannot be underestimated.

While the Council has been able to address some of the threats that confront us, we remain concerned at its inability to demonstrate the requisite political will and a commitment to effective decision-making, which have prevented it from being able to address other pressing challenges.

We also remain concerned that the Council is still unable to take a definitive decision on the conflict in the Middle East. The Council will soon have to transcend the division among its own members and speak with one voice on that tragic situation, or face the erosion of its credibility as an organ mandated to maintain international peace and security.

In recent months we have seen the Security Council debate a number of resolutions that would appear to reinterpret treaty obligations or to impose legislative demands on Member States. We believe that that demonstrates an unwelcome tendency by the Security Council to encroach on the work of the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the only democratic and fully representative international organ of the United Nations that has the unique ability to forge genuine international consensus on sensitive issues such as terrorism. Working through the General Assembly is the way to ensure that multilateralism protects weak States from being overwhelmed by powerful ones.

On matters of international peace and security, the Security Council is increasingly relying on regional organizations to take the lead in resolving conflicts. Regional organizations are increasingly becoming essential building blocks in the global security system. For the effective functioning of the United Nations system, it is important for the Organization and its agencies to be able to delegate responsibilities and to provide, where required, the necessary resources to regional organizations that are better placed to deal with peace and security challenges in their respective regions.

In that regard, Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations envisages situations in which the Security Council may utilize regional organizations by virtue of their proximity to, and knowledge of, a particular conflict. Regional organizations are well placed to intervene sooner than the Security Council process would allow. For instance, the African Union has been first in assisting the people of Burundi and Darfur. The African Union has already taken it upon itself to become involved in resolving conflict situations in spite of the lack of resources and logistical and material support. My delegation believes that the Security Council may soon have to define in clear terms how it can utilize regional organizations that are ready to assist in making the world a safer place. As it is, it has become quite noticeable, for example, that the international community has asked the African Union to expand its involvement in Darfur. Yet that request has not been accompanied by an announcement of resources that the international community is willing to

make available to the African Union to take on that responsibility.

There has been dramatic progress in the matter of the reform and expansion of the Security Council. In its resolution 48/26, of 1993, the General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. The Working Group was established because Member States recognized the need to address the eroding credibility and lack of representational equity in the Security Council. The Working Group was to examine formulas to increase the membership of the Security Council and make it relevant to the needs of the twenty-first century.

While we appreciate the efforts of Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, to revitalize the work of the Open-ended Working Group, it is disappointing that the Working Group has remained deadlocked since it was established, particularly on the vital issue of enlarging the Security Council.

In September 2000, the Millennium Summit reiterated the need for Security Council reform and called on Member States to intensify their efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the United Nations.

In September 2003, the Secretary-General announced the formation of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. South Africa was among those that welcomed the Panel, because we anticipated that it would give more momentum to the debate on the reform of the United Nations.

In September 2004, during the general debate at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, an overwhelming number of delegations pronounced themselves to be in support of reform of the Security Council. Nearly half of the membership of the Organization specifically called for an expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. South Africa supports the expansion of the Security Council's membership in both categories. As the Assembly is aware, President Thabo Mbeki has announced from South Africa that my country is ready to serve as a permanent member of a restructured and expanded Security Council. Recently, our Cabinet reaffirmed South Africa's availability to serve on a restructured Security Council and emphasized that the offer would be pursued in cooperation, rather than in competition, with other countries of the continent.

Increased political will at the highest levels of Government to address the reform and enlargement of the Security Council has increased the sense of urgency, and it is understood that the time is now ripe to take action on the expansion and reform of the Security Council.

The report of the High-level Panel will be out on 1 December 2004. We hope that delegations will give the Panel's report full consideration, and not just focus on the section regarding Security Council reform. We also hope that they will address development issues as well. We believe that other development issues, such as peace-building and providing support for States under stress, require urgent attention from the international community. That is the least the people of the world expect from us.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): My delegation extends its appreciation and thanks to the President of the Security Council for the month of October for introducing the report (A/59/2) of the Security Council to the General Assembly. The report covers a wide range of activities, and I wish to highlight some of them.

We are pleased to see general improvement in the subregion of West Africa, and we hope it will translate into lasting peace for the countries directly affected, and for the African continent as a whole.

As a country contributing troops to the United Nations Mission in Liberia, we are pleased to see that significant progress on the disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants is being attributed to the deployment of the United Nations Mission. It is our sincere hope that peace will return to Liberia and that the country will embark on sustainable development.

With regard to Sierra Leone, we agree with the decision of the Security Council to readjust the timetable for the drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone until the country is in a position to assume primary responsibility for internal security.

On the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we remain seriously perturbed by the continued violence in the eastern part of the country. Our persistent demand to strengthen the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(MONUC) with a robust mandate is dictated by reality on the ground, which in turn emanates from the vastness of the country and the continued violence in the east. While welcome, resolution 1565 (2004), which was adopted recently by the Security Council to increase the strength of MONUC, is not even near to being proportionate to the task at hand.

Peace in the region is of paramount importance for us in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It is for that reason that SADC Ministers, at a meeting in Lusaka of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, reaffirmed SADC's collective undertaking to safeguard the security and political stability of the region within the framework of the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and the Mutual Defence Pact.

The Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be given all support and assistance to anchor the peace. Interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must cease, and the Congolese people must fully benefit from their natural resources without plunder.

A massive humanitarian crisis is unfolding in the Darfur region of the Sudan. Against that background, my delegation reiterates its support for Security Council resolution 1564 (2004), which was adopted on 18 September of this year. While we fully support the efforts of the African Union in that regard, we feel strongly that the Security Council should assume full responsibility, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The objective of the ceasefire in Western Sahara was not to delay the realization of the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. It was to create an environment conducive to the implementation of the United Nations Settlement Plan, which was adopted by both the African Union and the United Nations and was agreed to by both parties. In our view, the Security Council has not exerted sufficient pressure to ensure that its resolutions on Western Sahara are honoured. We call upon both parties, and especially the Government of Morocco, to cooperate with the United Nations to ensure the implementation of the Settlement Plan. While we regret the resignation of Mr. James Baker, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, we hope that everything will be done to implement the Settlement Plan. With regard to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, we do not agree with the proposal to reduce its size. The priority here should be the implementation of the United Nations Settlement Plan.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is a challenge to the international community. We support a comprehensive and just settlement in Middle East and call for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

On the subject of peacekeeping, my delegation can only reiterate the need to fully support peacekeeping missions through the provision of financial, material and political support, as urged in the report of the Security Council.

Any measures to sustain the unity of the international community against international terrorism must be in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law and the law of treaties. We strongly suggest that, if Member States are to cooperate fully in combating terrorism and effectively implement the measures that have been adopted, they should be involved in the formulation of measures to combat it. The Security Council must not assume a legislative function in the war on terror — a function never allocated to it by the Charter of the United Nations — by prescribing obligations that many States will be unable to implement effectively, as they are inconsistent with the law of treaties. Such an exercise would undoubtedly undermine the very noble efforts of the international community to eliminate international terrorism.

On thematic issues, I wish to emphasize that, while taking into account the mandates of the various bodies of the United Nations, we believe that thematic issues add value to the deliberations of the Security Council. Having initiated the debate in the Security Council on the issue of women, peace and security, we are convinced that that debate and subsequent decisions have shifted the Council's focus from viewing women as mere victims of conflict to seeing women as indispensable contributors to peace-making and peacekeeping. In fact, women have today initiated some successful peace processes in Africa. That must be acknowledged, recognized and enhanced. Resolution 1325 (2000) is not about gender equality in

general; it is about the role of women in making peace and keeping the peace.

Member States have referred to the issue of Council reform every year during the general debate of the General Assembly since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. However, there is special significance to this issue this year as a result of the recommendations expected to be made by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which was appointed by the Secretary-General.

Furthermore, from an African perspective, the establishment of the African Union's Peace and Security Council has given a new dimension to the relationship between the Security Council and that Council.

In addition, we anticipate that the forthcoming review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals will have a positive impact on the reform of the United Nations as whole.

It is from that perspective that my delegation is participating in this debate.

During the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group presented us with a summary of the discussions in the Working Group. That summary gave us a valid and rich account of the views put forward by Member States, which need to be further strengthened by the General Assembly prior to being finalized.

With regard to criteria for membership of the Security Council, it must be stressed that size should not be substituted for capacity, and that capacity must not be narrowly defined in terms of material wealth. In addition, given the new era in which we live, it is important that the views of regional groups are taken fully into account.

With regard to increasing the membership of the Council, I wish to reiterate the decision of the African heads of State and Government set out in the Harare Declaration, namely, that Africa deserves at least two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats on the Council. The permanent seats would rotate among African Members States, and Africa would decide on its own the modality for rotation.

There is no doubt that the reform of the Security Council is a complex issue. Resolution 53/30 clearly lays out the circumstances under which a decision should be taken on that issue, which first appeared as an item on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1979.

The Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group has clearly undertaken initiatives to stimulate a focused discussion on the aspects of, and issues related to, the reform of the Security Council. We commend his efforts. We are convinced that the work of the Working Group dealing with this issue has produced some results, and that useful suggestions have been made by Member States. While the task of the Chairman is to facilitate deliberation, it is the responsibility of Member States to reach agreement.

All there is to be said about Security Council reform has been said. However, every action to be taken to achieve the reform of the Security Council has not been taken. The time has come for us to put an end to these perennial discussions. In that respect, my delegation supports the view of the Chairman contained in document A/58/57, namely, that the Working Group should set a deadline for the conclusion of its work. In our view, the special event envisaged for next year will provide an ideal opportunity for world leaders to make good on the decision they took at the Millennium Summit to intensify their efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all aspects. To that end, we call on Member States to show political will in order to reach agreement on this important issue.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I have the pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, to thank the former Chairman and Vice-Chairpersons of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council for their remarkable efforts in leading the work of the Group during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish them every success in carrying out that important task and in achieving general consensus among the Member States on strengthening the role and effectiveness of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The annual inclusion of the item on the reform of the Security Council on the agenda of the General Assembly reflects the paramount importance that the international community attaches to the issue of restructuring the Security Council and increasing its effectiveness as an integral part of the process of revitalizing and promoting the role of the United Nations system in order to strengthen the ability of the Organization to confront the challenges and developments of the twenty-first century.

Despite the in-depth consultations carried out by the Working Group since it was established in 1993 and the initiatives and proposals of regional groups, there are still great differences with regard to the views and positions of Member States on this issue, especially in connection with the issue of increasing the membership of the Council and other related matters, such as regional representation on the Council, the criteria for the selection of permanent members and the prerogatives and powers of new members. Differences also exist with regard to the decision-making process, accountability and the necessary measures and procedures that should be used in regulating the use of the veto.

The United Arab Emirates would like to reaffirm its support for the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on this matter. We note with satisfaction the progress made in the past few years to improve the Council's working methods. That progress has been reflected in the increase in the number of open plenary meetings, which have given non-members of the Council an opportunity to participate in the Council's debates, as well as in the increase in the number of public briefings held on matters of common concern to the international community.

However, the United Arab Emirates is deeply concerned about the policy of double standards followed by the Security Council when it takes up issues of concern to Arabs pertaining to the Middle East, such as the Palestinian question. That practice has impaired the Council's ability to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it. We urge the Council and its members to refrain from following such a policy, and to act in accordance with the principals of the Charter, relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and provisions of international humanitarian law.

We would also like to emphasize that the imbalance in the composition of the Council and the unequal distribution of powers and prerogatives among its members have greatly hindered the ability of the Council to address some of the most important items on its agenda, specifically those pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security. That has led to prolonging those issues, with the concomitant humanitarian disasters they entail. Our deliberations on this item should therefore cover all aspects of Security Council reform as an indivisible part of a comprehensive effort aimed at making the role of the Council more effective and responsible at improving democracy in its working methods so as to reflect the current political changes in international relations.

In that connection, we would like to reiterate our support for the following proposals.

First, we support an enlargement in the Council's permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. That enlargement should be proportionate and balanced and should have the approval of at least two thirds of the members of the General Assembly. It should also be based on the principles of the sovereign equality of Member States and equitable geographical representation, and should reflect the global character of the United Nations.

Secondly, we believe that any future restructuring of the Security Council must address the problem of the underrepresentation of developing countries so that the imbalance in geographical representation can be corrected and so that political balance in the Council can be enhanced.

Thirdly, we believe that a permanent seat should be allocated to the Group of Arab States. That seat would be filled by Arab countries on a rotating basis, and in accordance with the practices endorsed by the League of Arab States in the framework of discussions with both the Group of African States and the Group of Asian States.

Fourthly, in the event that agreement is reached on increasing the number of permanent members of the Security Council, we believe that those seats should go to countries that have truly demonstrated, in their relationship with the United Nations, the ability to discharge primary responsibility in such areas as the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as their capacity to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter in the economic, social and political arenas.

Fifthly, we think that priority should be given to establishing checks and balances on the use of the veto, in order to ensure impartiality and objectivity in the Security Council's decision-making process and in the exercise of its prerogatives and powers in addressing pressing global issues that require urgent intervention to stem bloodshed and to protect civilians and their property in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Sixthly, comprehensive, serious and objective periodic assessment of the Council's work must be carried out in order to institutionalize the Council's procedures and working methods and to ensure its ability to recognize the nature of the challenges it faces. In that connection, we emphasize the importance of strengthening coordination and cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as with regional organizations, in order to improve and strengthen the Council's capacity to address existing disputes and conflicts and to contain their serious implications for humankind.

In conclusion, we hope that our deliberations on this item will lead to a common and practical international vision to carry out substantial and positive reform in the Security Council, including in its composition and membership, as well as to improve its working methods in order to enable it to deal with the increasing challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Gordon (Philippines): My delegation believes that there is merit in today's joint debate on two interrelated agenda items, namely, on the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly and on the reform of the Security Council. The Philippines views this joint debate as an opportunity for the general membership of the United Nations to look more closely at how the Security Council has been responding meaningfully to the evolving international peace and security challenges posed by our ever-changing world. It also provides an opportunity for members of the Council to listen to the views of the general membership with regard to both the substantive and procedural conduct of its work. The Philippines and other members of the Security Council will benefit from the views of Member States on the two topics before us.

The report of the Security Council (A/59/2) is factual. The introduction presents, in chronological order, the actions taken with respect to each specific issue dealt with by the Council. The annexes catalogue all the actions pursued over the period under review in the performance of its primary role to preserve international peace and security.

The task of analysing the effectiveness of the Council in the performance of its role can, in my delegation's view, best be made by the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the United Nations.

In that regard, my delegation once again calls for more substantive consideration by the Assembly, not necessarily of the entire Council report, but at least of certain key issues addressed in it, in accordance with Article 12 of the Charter of the United Nations. In consultation with Member States, the President of the General Assembly may determine which issues should be more intensively discussed. The issues could be region- or country-specific, or could be any of the general themes the Council has considered. My delegation recommends that such discussions be carried out in an informal and open-ended format, either as informal consultations or as round-table exercises. The objective of an informal setting is to achieve a more thorough analysis of the work of the Council, an assessment many delegations have been clamouring for. That call must be heeded, given the status of the Security Council as the most powerful body entrusted with the responsibility to preserve international peace and security.

Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Philippines, stated in her address to the Assembly last year (see A/58/PV.13) that the actions of the Security Council in the pursuit of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and stability should be guided by the following principles: first, the principle of collective security, established under the Charter of the United Nations, should be observed; secondly, the Security Council should maintain and pursue a multilateral approach towards the performance of its primary role; and thirdly, observing the rule of law is of paramount importance in the maintenance of international peace and security.

My President did not offer those points as absolute benchmarks. They can, however, serve as

guideposts in a substantive analysis of the Council's work. They represent critical areas for consideration in the Assembly's more intensive discussion of the Council's work, which necessarily, but beneficially, entails more time being devoted to considering the Council's report.

The conclusions stemming from these informal discussions and analysis could represent a valuable input not only for the Council's consideration but also with respect to the next item we are considering today — the reform of the Security Council.

There is no question that reform of the Security Council is both important and urgent. It is important in order to ensure a balanced representation in the Security Council, and it is urgent because of the emergence of new and non-traditional threats to international peace and security requiring robust and effective responses on our part. Such responses require that we be fast, which means reacting immediately to certain issues that confront the world; that we be friendly, intelligible and understandable to the world so that it will be more supportive of the efforts of the United Nations; that we be flexible, so that we can immediately adapt to the changing, swirling tides of international affairs; and, most importantly, we must be forward-looking at all times, so that we can anticipate, protect people from, and prevent any exploitation or harassment of, and violence against, peoples, as well as safeguard their rights.

The need to reform the Council was formally recognized over a decade ago, when the Assembly adopted resolution 48/26 creating the Open-ended Working Group to address in detail the many aspects of Security Council reform. The emergence of new threats and challenges to international peace and security and shifting geopolitical realities have exerted even greater pressure in that respect, making the need for reform even more urgent and imperative. Over 120 countries took the floor during the Assembly's general debate last month calling for the Council's reform.

During its 10 years of work, the Working Group succeeded in reaching general agreement on two issues — namely, the improvement of the Council's decision-making process, leading to the more open and transparent conduct of its work; and the expansion of its membership. However, there is no agreement as yet on the details of such an expansion in terms of size or category — that is, whether to increase the number of non-permanent or permanent seats, or both.

My delegation believes that the key criterion in resolving the thorny issues of size and category is that of balanced representation, among other vital criteria. This is a delicate and sensitive issue that has eluded any agreement, despite the variety of formulas put forward.

In that connection, my delegation would like once again to invite the attention of the Assembly to three important points raised by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines when he addressed the Assembly during its general debate last month.

First, the Philippines called for a holistic reform not only of the Security Council but also of all other relevant United Nations structures requiring a redefinition of their relationships and responsibilities in the security field. That call implies a radical reform also of the Economic and Social Council and the strengthening of the powers of the Secretary-General.

Poverty and pandemic diseases such as AIDS, or even the flu, for instance, are not merely economic and public health issues. They constitute threats to security, as they are breeding grounds for conflicts which fall beyond the purview of the Security Council's mandate. The Secretary-General is supposed to be the executive arm of the United Nations, entrusted with the execution of directives from its parliamentary organs. Regrettably, he lacks the requisite authority — especially over the affiliated United Nations agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions, run by their respective governing boards — to exercise that executive power.

These examples underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to reform in the response of the United Nations to security challenges, as advocated by the Philippines.

Secondly, reform of the United Nations should be backed by a consensus on the promotion of collective ownership, and Security Council reform should give consideration to the views of the permanent members.

We should not, therefore, be polarized by narrow national and group interests, but unified by upholding the common or universal interest, if consensus is to be achieved. We should engage the permanent members of the Security Council in constructive consultations on

the Council's reform in order to bring the process to fruition.

Thirdly, one of the important criteria in the selection of new permanent members in the Council is the candidates' contributions in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, a country such as Japan deserves to be considered for permanent membership.

It is my delegation's view that, if these three points are considered, it would greatly facilitate the reform of the Security Council as an integral element of the broader reform process of the United Nations aimed at enabling it to more effectively respond to challenges to international peace and security.

However meritorious reform proposals are, including those that may be recommended by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, none may ever be agreed upon if there is no political will to reach an acceptable compromise beneficial to the common good, especially on the sensitive issues involved in Security Council reform.

The task ahead is difficult, but, with the requisite political will, it will not be insurmountable.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): The report of the Security Council tells us that, over the past 12 months, the pace of activities was intense as the Council addressed a wide range of issues. We were not given a detailed analysis of the issues covered, but the report does give us an adequate descriptive account of the various matters that were dealt with and the actions taken. The Council deserves commendation for having undertaken such a considerable volume of work, through consultations, meetings and briefings, in a continuous round of activity. However, the overall record of achievement is mixed; there were positive outcomes, but, in other areas, there was little progress, and even some significant setbacks.

In Africa, there were three new peace missions authorized, and overall substantial progress was achieved in peace-building efforts and in reducing significant areas of conflict. Although an exit strategy must always be contemplated, it is important that the Council remain engaged to consolidate the gains made, continue the process of national reconciliation, and build the economic and social foundations for enduring stability.

In the Sudan, where the situation is still volatile, what is important is that the Council remain constructively engaged, working with the Government of the Sudan and with the African Union to promote peace, stability and order and for the facilitation of humanitarian relief.

With respect to the deterioration in the situation in Haiti in the early part of this year, the report tells us that the Council reacted promptly and effectively. The delegation of Jamaica disagrees with that assessment.

The fact is that the Council did not act promptly. The Council initially failed to respond to the request of the Haitian Government — which was supported by the Caribbean Community — and acted only in the wake of controversial political events which still have some troubling implications. Despite that, Jamaica remains in full support of the operations of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Beyond the immediate tasks of restoration of order and national reconciliation, we reaffirm the crucial importance of long-term social and economic development and of the fight against poverty in Haiti to sustain stability and peace.

In the Middle East, we see the pattern of recent years. The Council has been unable to act to curtail the escalation of violence. Political realities restrict its options and its ability to act with unity, authority and firmness. It is more and more evident that the Quartet and its road map are not leading to a solution. A bolder approach is needed which constrains the parties to respect the will of the international community for a comprehensive settlement. In Iraq, an effective role for the United Nations has proved difficult in the political evolution of events and in the face of a volatile security situation. We have confidence that the Secretary-General remains ready to do what is possible in order to assist in rebuilding a stable environment and in restoring Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

With respect to counter-terrorism, we note the efforts at revitalization of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in monitoring the implementation of Council resolution 1373 (2001). We believe it is also important that the Committee avoid being overly bureaucratic and inflexible in its operations and that it work with States to assist in providing practical assistance where difficulties in implementation arise.

In adopting its resolution 1540 (2004), the Council took a step which caused deep concern to many delegations. We appreciate the fact that there were some consultations with the broader membership and that there was no difficulty with the objective, namely, preventing the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists and non-State entities. However, resolution 1540 (2004) was an unusual use of the Council's powers under Chapter VII and has some troubling implications. We will now say only that the normal method for imposing such binding obligations should be by a treaty process.

We continue to feel the need to urge the Council to apply equal standards to the conduct of all States. There should be no double standards or selectivity where there are violations of the Charter and of international law. The Council should act judiciously in upholding legality and should act objectively in settling disputes on the basis of justice and fairness. It should be not only developing countries that must always face the prospect of sanctions and enforcement action. If that continues to be the pattern of Council action, there will be continued erosion in its credibility and legitimacy.

We continue to express our opposition to the holding of thematic debates in the Security Council. We take the view that those activities go beyond the mandate of the Council, which is empowered to consider threats to international peace and security. And they encroach on the authority of the General Assembly, which is the organ entrusted to discuss and determine norms and policies in broad areas of international cooperation. Regrettably, we note that the Council increased its activities in the holding of thematic debates over the past year. We feel that that endangers the proper balance in the exercise of the responsibilities of the various organs of the United Nations system.

We also continue to have concerns about the procedures of the Council in relation to transparency and accountability. It is increasingly rare for the Council to hold debates on actual situations affecting international peace and security. Holding such debates allows the Council to hear the views and recommendations of Member States as well as the positions of the parties. Regrettably, even when such debates are held, Council members give their views before hearing those of the wider community. That is a practice which should change. It is important to emphasize that, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council is accountable to the international community, on whose behalf it is exercising the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, we would request that the views expressed in this debate should be drawn to the attention of the Security Council, in accordance with the recent decisions on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

I now turn to the subject of reform of the Security Council. We have noted the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/58/47). It is not surprising that, once again, no consensus was possible and that the various issues were only debated again with fervour. What is clear now is that some decision has to be taken. Debate and discussion cannot go on forever. In the light of our expectation of proposals from the Secretary-General based on the recommendations of his High-level Panel, to be introduced in December, a final determination need not be made at the current session. But it cannot be delayed beyond the sixtieth session. It is time for action. Decisions have to be taken which are vital for the legitimacy and the authority of the Council. The questions of representation and the abolition of the veto are foremost and should be decided by the General Assembly, proceeding on the basis of rules for decision-making set out in the Charter.

At this stage, Jamaica will not make detailed comments on the issues and will await the proposals of the Secretary-General, which, along with the results of the Working Group's deliberations, will form the basis on which we will make our own pronouncement. In the meantime, we support the recommendation in paragraph 30 of the Working Group's report that the Group continue its work during the fifty-ninth session.

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like first to speak of the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly on the Council's work during the period 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004. We would like to thank the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom for introducing the report.

The report of the Security Council indicates that the majority of items on its agenda concern the African continent. We welcome the approach, adopted by the Council during the period under review, of holding open debates on issues related to the African continent. We hope that the vision proposed by the general membership of the Organization during these meetings will establish a clear foundation for a better understanding of the challenges faced on that continent. We would also like to note the continued development of cooperation between the Council, on the one hand, and the African Union and African regional organizations, on the other, in the area of peacekeeping and conflict resolution on the continent. We call for increasing and strengthening such activities and for the further development of their mechanisms.

Despite the Council's repeated failure to shoulder its responsibilities in the face of the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and its failure to adopt three draft resolutions during the period under review, one important positive development emerged during that period: the adoption of Council resolution 1515 (2003), which endorsed the road map.

We would like once again to affirm that the concept of peace and security is comprehensive and includes economic, social, humanitarian and geographic aspects that cannot be separated or dealt with in isolation. Accordingly, the Security Council must undertake its main responsibilities in peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building in cooperation and coordination with the relevant regional organizations and with the programmes and organs of the United Nations, at the forefront of which are the General Assembly, including its Main Committees, and the Economic and Social Council. This is the case because those two organs constitute the appropriate legislative machinery to formulate the principles that should govern the overall peace-building process.

I would like to turn now to Egypt's thinking on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. First, Mr. President, I would like to thank your predecessor and express my appreciation for his initiative to stimulate a substantive discussion of this issue. This was helped by the papers and statistics that he prepared, which enriched last session's deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. His efforts also led to the Working Group's adoption of its report to the General Assembly (A/58/47), which in our view is a new launching pad for continuing our deliberations on this important issue. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Ecuador and Liechtenstein, the coordinators on this issue during the fifty-eighth session.

My delegation does not want to reiterate the principles underlying the Egyptian position, which we have done for the past 11 years whenever the issue was addressed. Nor do we wish to go into the details of our position on the expansion of the Security Council — which we set out in our statement during the general debate on 24 September, at the 10th plenary meeting, in which we declared our readiness to assume permanent responsibilities in the framework of our full compliance with the position endorsed by African leaders in 1997 in Harare pertaining to the number of permanent and non-permanent seats that should be allocated to Africa and how they should be filled. My delegation also reaffirms its support for the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on the number of proposed Security Council members, as well as its position on the categories of membership. All those positions are governed by our fundamental approach to this topic, which is that reform must be the subject of greater consensus, must not lead to the exclusion of particular civilizations or cultures from the international political decision-making process, and must reflect the current political realities without marginalizing certain parties that we believe have great importance in collective international action in the political, security and economic spheres.

We are also convinced that Security Council reform cannot be carried out without an objective examination by the General Assembly of its working methods, and of the concepts of accountability and transparency, which must be the solid principles of the mechanisms of collective international action in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Our discussion of the item before the Assembly today has a new dynamic, one that we sensed in the last session and that we are increasingly noticing during the present one. Indeed, that dynamic is reflected in our current discussion of the topic. Many countries have expressed the need to consider in depth the issue of Security Council reform and all related matters. Perhaps one reason for the great focus on the

issue by the international community is that we are awaiting the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. In addition, our proceedings during this session have greater importance because we are preparing for the high-level meeting to be held during the sixtieth session to review the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, which included United Nations reform. We must engage in an in-depth and serious discussion of the six topics that were proposed by the General Assembly President at the previous session, and which were the basis of the deliberations of the Working Group.

We must not lose sight of what we should achieve and must not confuse that with the narrow vision of what we want to achieve. We need to achieve an equitable and balanced representation on the Council that will equally meet the rights of developing and developed countries. Reform must not create a less capable Council. Reform and expansion must be achieved in parallel. We must not have either reform or expansion alone. We need to show genuine desire and serious political will to strike a comprehensive balance between reform and expansion. That balance must combine the equitable distribution of new seats, equitable geographical representation that takes into consideration the changes that have taken place in some areas since the end of the cold war, and representation of all cultures and civilizations. Expansion must also lead to the revitalization of the Council's work and must secure its objectivity, its impartiality and its respect for the principles of transparency and accountability.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the delegation of Egypt affirms its support for your efforts and its total readiness to cooperate with you and with all Member States to ensure the successful conclusion of the Working Group's efforts.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The Charter of the United Nations confers upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. When the Security Council acts it does so on behalf of the international community. When it is powerless to act or when it fails to do so, the credibility of the United Nations and of the entire international community is at stake. It is therefore in everybody's interest that the Security Council be effective and respected, that it demonstrate wisdom and fairness by not acting in haste or showing favouritism. It is also in the interest of all that its composition be fully representative of the community on whose behalf it acts and which gives it the necessary legitimacy to do so.

It is therefore time to move forward with Security Council reform. Switzerland supports an increase in the membership of the Council to strengthen the legitimacy of its decisions and their implementation by Member States. The composition of the Security Council should better reflect changes that have occurred since the Organization was founded. A greater role should be allocated to the developing countries, where the greatest number of people live, and better account should be taken of the particular financial and material support that certain countries provide to the United Nations system.

My country is in favour of expanding the Security Council, but it is against creating new seats that have veto power. We are against it because the current exercise of the veto is not democratic, but also because it would affect the Council's ability to act.

To make the expansion possible, we need to find a balanced formula acceptable to the greatest possible number of Member States. We note that the Working Group on expansion of the Security Council has not been able, after 10 years of commendable effort, to find a formula that it could submit to the General Assembly. Switzerland believes that the debate must now be taken to another level, and we eagerly await the proposals of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, appointed by the Secretary-General to take up the question of strengthening collective security.

The expansion of the Security Council is the most visible and the most frequently discussed aspects of Council reform, but it is not the only aspect that needs to be taken into account. Switzerland attaches great importance to reforms — perhaps less dramatic, but equally essential — in the functioning of the Security Council.

Important improvements could be undertaken without any formal revision of the Charter. First, with regard to the exercise of the veto, my country has called for greater restraint here. Any abuse of the veto affects the credibility of the United Nations and increases the already widespread feeling in certain regions of the world that double standards are sometimes being used. Furthermore, to the extent that the veto is a kind of privilege, could one not expect

people who use the veto to explain that use in the General Assembly after the event? Would it not be a means for a State concerned to have its position better understood by the international community?

Secondly, Switzerland hopes that the work of the Security Council will continue to evolve towards greater transparency and greater participation by non-Members of the Council. There is a need to strengthen the mechanisms for consultations with the States directly concerned by tension in their areas, as well as with those that contribute to peace operations.

Switzerland also believes that greater progress should be made towards making working documents available. The Security Council deals with matters that affect all Member States and that require decisive action by all States. It is, therefore, important that all States have access to the documents and draft resolutions as soon as they are being considered in the Council. This should occur without any delay and in a heightened spirit of transparency. Current practices here are inadequate.

Thirdly, Switzerland believes that the General Assembly should once again play a central role in the functioning of the Organization. The ongoing reform of its working methods will, I hope, help to revitalize this organ.

For its part, the Security Council must retain the area of competence entrusted to it by the Charter. Yet, in three recent resolutions, the Security Council has acted as a legislator, imposing new obligations in a discretionary manner on Member States, and this has been done outside of the normal context of sanctions. It was done in response to an urgent need to combat terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This kind of action should, however, remain the exception. The elaboration of new rules of international law with universal scope should occur, not within a restricted circle, but with the participation of all, within the United Nations General Assembly, or through other normal diplomatic mechanisms.

The question of strengthening collective action is central to the current session of the General Assembly. The time is right to make progress on the reforms that have been discussed for so long. Switzerland calls upon all those interested to be open-minded and to be willing to find a formula that is acceptable to the greatest number of States.

Mr. Zaki (Pakistan): This item has been under consideration in the General Assembly for over a decade. The delay is a reflection of the importance and complexity of the issues involved.

There is general consensus that the Security Council's composition and its working methods are not democratic. Decisions are taken by a few. The five permanent members, some more than others, exercise inordinate influence over the Council's decisions. Simultaneously, there is visible concern at the increasing concentration of decision-making power in the Security Council in relation to the other organs of the United Nations.

The endeavour to improve the Security Council should be guided by a vision of creating a new multilateralism that is democratic and cooperative, rather than oligarchic and coercive. It must address the principal concerns of the United Nations membership about the competence and sphere of responsibility of the Security Council; its composition and representativeness; its decision-making and working methods; and its effectiveness and accountability.

First, I will address the issue of the Security Council's competence. The Security Council has been assigned the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security under the Charter, specifically under Chapters VI and VII. But the Charter clearly stipulates that the Security Council acts on behalf of the General Assembly. Consequently, the Council is accountable for its decisions and actions to the general membership, which is represented in this General Assembly. Moreover, the Security Council cannot exclude the Assembly from reviewing its work and decisions; nor can it arbitrarily acquire exclusive competence over issues that do not directly involve the maintenance of peace and security — such as terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation. A major goal of any United Nations reform process must be to ensure the balance of responsibilities, envisaged under the Charter, between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Secondly, there is the Council's decision-making. Both the Charter and the Council's provisional rules of procedure provide for discussion and decisions in open meetings and in a transparent manner. It is only thus that States can be held accountable for their positions and policies on the issues under consideration. Unfortunately, over the past three decades, most of the

Security Council's deliberations and decisions take place in closed "informal consultations". Even the parties directly involved in various conflicts and disputes are almost completely excluded from participation in the deliberative and decision-making process. The Council's decisions are mostly *ex parte* — derogating an essential principle of due process. In the Council, initiatives emanate mostly from one or more of the five permanent members, or other small groupings of major Powers, usually designated as "Friends" of the issue. The right of veto is usually exercised informally and invisibly — and, more infrequently, openly — to ensure that the Security Council's decisions not infringe the interests of the permanent members. Given the binding nature of the Council's decisions, the power of the veto — explicit or implicit — has been used extensively to shape the international policies and behaviour of other States on an increasing number of issues.

The reform of the Security Council must prescribe ways and means to introduce greater democracy and due process into its deliberations and decision-making. Open meetings should be the rule and not the exception. The exercise of the veto must be fully justified, including allowing a possible review by the General Assembly and even by the International Court of Justice. Similarly, the Council's decisions to take enforcement action under Chapter VII should be subjected to a periodic review by the United Nations General Assembly to ensure against injustice and injury to less powerful nations.

On the composition of the Council, it is quite evident that the Security Council's current composition is not representative of the general membership. While the five permanent members can be considered a separate and exceptional category, the proportional representation of the rest of United Nations membership has become progressively worse over the last few decades. In 1945, leaving aside the five permanent members, 46 United Nations Member States were represented by 6 elected States on the Council — a proportion of 7.5 to 1. By 1951, when the Council's expansion was proposed, 71 Member States were represented by 6 elected States — a proportion of 11.5 to 1. By 1966, when the Council was enlarged to 15 members, 122 Member States were represented by 10 elected States — a proportion of 12 to 1. Today, 186 States are represented by 10 States — a proportion of 18 to 1. It is clear, therefore, that the number of elected members of the Security Council must be enlarged. It should at least restore the proportion of 10 to 1. This would indicate the addition of at least 10 new elected members, and thus a Security Council composed of 25 Member States.

Secondly, the enlargement should reflect the regional composition of the general membership of the United Nations. Thus, the Council's enlargement should accord larger representation to Asia, Africa and Latin America, which are presently underrepresented in comparison to the other two regional groups.

Thirdly, the expansion should accord representation to those States that entered the United Nations after the last enlargement of the Council in 1966. These are mostly small- and medium-sized States. It is those small- and medium-sized States, and not the larger States seeking permanent membership for themselves on the Security Council, which comprise the vast majority of the general membership and constitute the "new international reality".

If the issue of enlargement had been guided by an objective approach, agreement would have been reached several years ago. Unfortunately, consensus has been frustrated by the ambitions of a few States that desire the privileged status of the permanent five. This status was the result of an historical agreement and is an unfortunate legacy with which the United Nations membership has had to live. Our efforts should seek to temper the inequity and imbalance resulting from this unfortunate legacy, not to compound it further by creating new centres of privilege within the United Nations. New permanent members will not neutralize the inordinate influence of existing permanent members. Two wrongs cannot make a right. A larger oligarchy is no antidote to an elite power club. The unequal power of the five can be tempered by the combined endeavours of the general membership only by adding a sufficient number of elected members who can influence the deliberations and decisions of the Security Council. If four or five new permanent members are added to a Council of 25, the rest of the United Nations membership — 181 States — will continue to be grossly underrepresented on the Council.

Such an addition of new permanent members would thus further erode the principle of sovereign equality and the concept of collective security enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It would

aggravate tensions within every regional group, since the claim of each of the aspirants for permanent status is opposed by other Member States from their own respective regions. It would exclude the equitable participation of other States that have equal or better credentials for permanent membership than some of the four or five self-nominated aspirants.

Already, the announcement of the collective ambition of the so-called G-4s has provoked open divisions within and among regions. Several other countries have declared their own candidacies. The foreign ministers of the Islamic countries have declared that any reform proposal that neglects the adequate representation of the Islamic Ummah, in any category of membership in an expanded Security Council, will not be acceptable to the Islamic countries.

Moreover, the addition of new permanent members would further complicate decision-making in the Security Council. Such decisions would have to accommodate the interests of nine or 10 permanent members rather than the present five. This would happen even if the new permanent members agreed to forego the right of veto.

It is in view of such considerations that the Non-Aligned Movement countries have taken the logical position that, if there is no agreement on other categories of membership, expansion should take place, for the time being, in the non-permanent category. Many countries outside the Non-Aligned Movement also share this view.

Enlargement in the category of non-permanent members would adhere to the principle of sovereign equality, ensure greater representation of the general membership and promote greater democracy and accountability in the work of the Security Council. Instead of a new "concert of power", we must promote the power of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the new paradigm of a cooperative and democratic multilateralism through an enlarged and reformed Security Council.

It is the hope of the Pakistan delegation that it is this approach that will inspire the report and recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We hope that that report will also help to promote general consensus on the issue of Security Council reform and enlargement. We are prepared, in this context, to consider new ideas and approaches to promote consensus.

However, any effort to rush through a proposal on the sensitive issue of Security Council enlargement by a vote in the General Assembly will be manifestly divisive. It will defeat the very purpose of the Panel's report, which, as we understand, is to promote collective and unified action within a unified world Organization in order to address the new and old threats to peace and security. It is the aspirations of the general membership, not the ambitions of the few, that must drive the reform process.

Pakistan believes that the reform of the Security Council should be part of the comprehensive United Nations reform, which includes the revitalization of the United Nations General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies. The issue of Security Council expansion cannot be considered in a piecemeal fashion divorced from other issues, such as its competence, decision-making ability, working methods and accountability.

The general membership must have the time and the opportunity to consider the issues and the report and recommendations of the Secretary-General's Panel. Mr. President, this exercise must be conducted within the Assembly under your guidance. We should aim at adopting comprehensive decisions on the Panel's report, including on United Nations reform, by consensus at the high-level event, to be convened next year by the Secretary-General to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

Mr. Kim Sam-hoon (Republic of Korea): Over the past year, the Security Council has continued and expanded its vital work around the world. Rather than commenting on every aspect of that work, I would like to focus on several issues that are of particular importance to the Republic of Korea before moving on to the matter of Security Council reform.

The Republic of Korea commends the efforts of the Security Council to combat terrorism and calls on all Member States to provide all possible assistance and cooperation. We strongly support the continuing work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and agree that it should be revitalized. We are also encouraged by the increasing coordination between the CTC and other bodies, including international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as the Al Qaeda/Taliban sanctions Committee.

In addition, the Republic of Korea commends the Security Council on its unanimous adoption of resolution 1566 (2004) last Friday, which rightly recognizes, in its operative paragraph 3, that terrorist acts

> "are under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar nature".

The emphasis on protecting and compensating civilian victims is also noteworthy. We look forward to stronger, more concerted international efforts to combat terrorism through the creation of a new working group under the Security Council. Only by working together at every level can the international community hope to rid itself of the scourge of terrorism.

A distinct but related matter is how to prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists. By adopting resolution 1540 (2004), the Security Council aptly addressed that grave concern. Indeed, we note with interest that the Council has taken on an increasing role in filling the gaps within the existing international legal regime by imposing binding and far-reaching obligations on all United Nations Member States to take domestic legal and administrative measures.

We recognize the concern expressed by some countries that Security Council actions with law-making implications on such issues as non-proliferation and counter-terrorism may short-circuit the treaty-making process involving all countries. However, given the urgency of these matters and the complexities of normal treaty-making procedures, we accept that the Security Council may need to take relevant action in cases where efficiency and speed are required. As a demonstration of our firm commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the Republic of Korea is complying fully with resolution 1540 (2004), and we encourage all Member States to do likewise.

Over the last year, the Security Council focused much of its work on Iraq, where there have been both triumphs and tragedies. Despite the ongoing violence and terrorism, there have been significant successes, including the transfer of sovereignty to the Interim Government of Iraq and the adoption of resolution 1546 (2004), which we strongly support. We believe that now more than ever, the international community must come together to provide support and assistance to the sovereign nation of Iraq as it struggles to establish security, hold elections, create democratic institutions and rebuild its civil society and infrastructure.

We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the people of Afghanistan on their first-ever democratic presidential election. After decades of despair, Afghanistan has passed yet another milestone on its path of hope. The Republic of Korea reaffirms its support for the Government and the people of Afghanistan in their ongoing efforts towards stability, democracy and peace.

The Republic of Korea supports the dedicated work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to develop and recommend new strategies and reforms for the United Nations in order to enable it to deal more effectively with challenges to international peace and security. We believe that, of all the issues considered by the Panel, Security Council reform is of foremost concern. As the Security Council takes on an increasingly crucial and extensive role in maintaining peace and security around the world, the matter of reform has become all the more important.

The position of the Republic of Korea on Security Council reform has been stated many times in the Open-ended Working Group and in general debates. We strongly believe that the Security Council should be reformed in such a way as to make it more representative of international realities, more accountable to the general membership, and more effective and operationally efficient than it is today. The Republic of Korea shares the view that an increase in the non-permanent membership is the most realistic formula for meeting those criteria.

We share the concern that an expansion of the permanent membership would weaken the institutional vitality of the United Nations by alienating and marginalizing a significant number of countries that possess the willingness and the capability to contribute substantially to international peace and security. By contrast, an increase in elected members would make the Council more accountable while strengthening the sense of shared ownership of the United Nations and the Security Council by the general membership.

The Republic of Korea also attaches great importance to rectifying existing imbalances among

regional groups in terms of an individual country's average chances of being represented on the Security Council. Under the current system, the Asian Group is grossly underrepresented. Although it comprises 53 Member States that are eligible for non-permanent membership on the Security Council, it is allocated the same number of seats as the Group of Western European and Other States, which is half the size of the Asian Group, with 26 eligible Member States. As such, the average chance of an Asian State to serve on the Council is one-half that of a member of the Group of Western European and Other States, or two-thirds that of an African or Latin American country. We believe that, in reforming the Security Council, such inequity and unfairness should be rectified as a matter of the highest priority.

In conclusion, cooperation and unity among the whole United Nations membership will be necessary to surmount the daunting challenges ahead. Therefore, the reform of the Security Council must be carried out in a way that enhances unity among Member States.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Expressing support for the joint consideration of items on the agenda of the General Assembly is one of the many ways in which we participate in efforts to revitalize the Assembly. However, in the case of today's debate, such joint consideration is much more than a technical exercise and a time-saving measure. In fact, we are of the view that each of the items before us is inherently a part of the other; therefore, only a joint discussion can be meaningful.

The report of the Security Council (A/59/2) is the main tool defining the relationship between two of the principal organs of the United Nations. It is worth mentioning that the Council has increasingly opened up to the wider United Nations membership, in particular through the holding of open debates on issues that are believed to be of concern to the wider membership. We welcome that practice and regularly participate in those debates. At the same time, we have no illusions as to the impact that those debates normally have on decision-making in the Council. Also, there are no recognizable criteria that govern the convening of open debates. Just this past Friday, the Council adopted its resolution 1566 (2004), which, to our mind and to the minds of many others, would have warranted an open debate for reasons of both substance and procedure, but such a debate did not take place. Instead, the wider membership will have an opportunity to express its opinions only after the fact.

Our understanding of the relationship between the Council and the Assembly is clear: the Council acts — in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations — on behalf of the entire membership. By electing the non-permanent members of the Council, the General Assembly entrusts those States with handling issues related to international peace and security on its behalf and accepts the relevant decisions as legally binding. The same kind of accountability extends — implicitly and to a greater degree — to the non-elected members of the Council, which have a special, and certainly not a lesser, responsibility to bear. We are therefore of the view that the current interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly is not sufficient. We certainly hope that the measures agreed upon in the context of the revitalization exercise will constitute a step forward.

Against that general background of accountability, we also find that the report before us, comprehensive as it is, lacks the necessary analytical depth and fails to address many relevant questions. Ever since it adopted its resolution 1373 (2001), the Council has expanded its activities into the field of law-making, a domain that, under the Charter, is reserved to the General Assembly. Parts of the current practice — as we witnessed once again during the reporting period — thus raise fundamental questions that affect the institutional balance of the Organization. However, the report before us remains silent on that topic.

The momentum for Security Council reform is growing, as the general debate of the fifty-ninth session very clearly illustrated, and it appears that you in particular, Mr. President, and your Office will face a special and indeed historic challenge. A variety of factors are leading to the recognition that more than 10 years of discussion are sufficient and that we cannot continue to adopt a wait-and-see attitude with regard to expansion of the Security Council. We fully share the view that the Council needs to more be modern and more representative if it is to truly represent the international community as a whole; we already expressed our national position in that respect several years ago.

At the same time, we firmly believe that expansion is only one element — clearly a central

element — of Security Council reform. A truly representative Council must represent the membership not only geographically, but also in substance. That understanding of representation is as important a challenge as expansion is. In fact, it has been a part of the discussions on Security Council reform for more than 10 years now. Practice with regard to the application of the veto and the greater inclusion of affected States that are not members of the Council must be part of such reform.

One of the main factors in the ongoing build-up to Security Council reform is the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, to be submitted at the beginning of December. We all know that the Panel cannot reform the Security Council on our behalf. But we must also not forget that expansion is not the core of the Panel's mandate. It was a true crisis of the Council and of multilateralism that led the Secretary-General to establish the High-Level Panel. No one will argue that the size of the Council was at the root of that crisis. To our mind, one must therefore conclude that only comprehensive reform — including expansion, and going beyond it — can create a more credible and thus more effective Security Council.

Mr. Wali (Nigeria): On behalf of the Nigerian delegation to the United Nations at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, I wish to express my appreciation to the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, for introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/59/2).

My delegation considers the annual reporting of the work of the Security Council to the General Assembly not merely as a matter of routine, in fulfilment of the relevant article of the Charter of the United Nations; it is also a means of acquainting Members of the United Nations with the workings of the Security Council and with the scope of its decisions and challenges in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security.

There is hardly any doubt that the report provides a comprehensive picture of the decisions of the Council. What is not clear is the assessment of the success or otherwise of those Council measures. As it is now, Member States can hardly properly evaluate the workings of the Council or its shortcomings on the basis of the report with a view to recommending remedial action. There is a need, therefore, for more details on the circumstances that influence the Council's adoption of resolutions and its decision-making.

One of those challenges concerns conflicts in Africa, which dominated the work of the Council during the reporting period. Nigeria appreciates the role of the Council in the search for solutions to the crises in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, and we welcome past and ongoing initiatives with regard to Somalia, Western Sahara, the Central African Republic and the situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea. This interest is reflected in the Security Council's speedy authorization of peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Liberia (UNMIL) and Burundi (ONUB).

As part of efforts to respond to these challenges in the area of peacekeeping, the Council rightly devoted a meeting last year to discuss peacekeeping activities in the pursuit of international peace and security. Along with this welcome initiative came the adoption of resolution 1502 (2003) on the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones. However, as the open debate on United Nations peacekeeping operations on 17 May 2004 revealed, the Organization would need enormous resources to address the worldwide demands for peacekeeping operations. The awareness created in the course of that debate should generate much needed political support for United Nations peacekeeping operations and for measures to tackle the root causes of conflicts that make such operations necessary in the first place.

Allow me, in this regard, to commend the Security Council's support to our subregional and regional organizations, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union. We point to the steady progress made in the peace process in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire as clear evidence of that support. We also note with satisfaction that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has improved with the reactivation of the joint verification mechanism at Abuja in June 2004, on the initiative of the President of Nigeria and Chairman of the African Union, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Paul Kagame of Rwanda. We are confident that this mechanism will create the right atmosphere for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in that subregion.

It is noteworthy that the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, established by the Council, has continued to be active in engaging with countries in Africa to find durable solutions to these conflicts. Its joint meeting with the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi of the Economic and Social Council and with non-governmental experts on regional and international norms on unconstitutional regime change in Africa point to that fact.

Undoubtedly, the situation in the Sudan posed serious challenges to the African Union and the international community at the time the report was written. The Security Council's involvement, through the adoption of resolution 1556 (2004), contributed to bringing under control the humanitarian dimension of the problem in the Darfur region of the country. My delegation is pleased to note that the Security Council will continue to lend its support to the Government of the Sudan and the African Union in resolving the conflict. We look forward to the work of the panel of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on allegations of human rights violations in the Sudan.

The festering crisis in the Middle East continues to be of concern to Nigeria. We note in the report that the Council remains committed to this issue, especially in the implementation of the road map by the Quartet. Events in the region have given a sense of urgency to finding a durable solution and to the role of the Council in doing so. It is our hope that, despite the setbacks reflected in the violence and heavy death tolls on both sides, the Council will continue to lend its weight to a permanent solution that recognizes the existence of two States living side by side.

A major area of the Council's work mentioned in the report concerns the progress made in the global effort to combat terrorism. That issue featured on the Council's agenda during the period covered by the report, in the wake of the increase of terrorist attacks worldwide. Nigeria firmly supports the efforts of the international community to confront and neutralize terrorist attacks within and against Member States of the Organization. We note with satisfaction the continuing involvement of the Council in this important matter, and we welcome resolution 1566 (2004), adopted by the Council only last Friday.

As regards the working methods of the Council, Nigeria appreciates recent positive trends, including regular consultations between the Council and regional and subregional organizations. We also note that regular meetings were held with troop-contributing countries, as were open debates, including at the ministerial level, on issues affecting Member States. We believe that the President of the Council's practice of conducting monthly briefings to the press was useful, as was the invitation to non-members to attend periodic wrap-up sessions. Clearly, a lot more needs to be done to improve our knowledge of the Council's work methods and appreciation of the basis of its decisions. For example, the Council's closed meetings and informal consultations should be reduced to a minimum, while more open meetings should be conducted in order to demonstrate the transparency and accountability of the Council.

On the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, my delegation would like to register our appreciation for the initiative of your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. His initiative added fresh impetus to the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. Member States collectively support a reform of the Security Council, but with different parameters.

As my President stated in the course of the general debate in his address to this Assembly at its 7th meeting, on 23 September,

> "the Security Council should be expanded in its permanent and non-permanent categories to make it more representative, more effective and more acceptable. We hope that those regions of the world that are not currently represented in the permanent membership category will be given membership".

My delegation wishes to assure the Assembly of our cooperation and support in meeting the challenges of this arduous task.

The meeting was rose at 1.10 p.m.